

SHARON COLEMAN

PRESIDENT
PEABODY-VANCE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Medical District-Peabody Vance Neighborhood

Resident; Owner of Ritzee Florist & Interior Designs since 1988; President of the Peabody Vance Neighborhood Association

The number of years being a part of the Medical District?

I have been the first Peabody Vance Neighborhood Association president since its inception in 2007. In 2007 we were not considered a part of the Medical District it was not until meeting with Dr. Brown of U.T. in 2014 that the underserved neighborhood was considered and adopted as a part of what is now known to be the Medical District

How did you get involved in the work you do now?

I'm an accountant, therapist, actress, author of non-fiction stories, and a business owner of Ritzee Florist since 1988. After my storefronts in East Memphis and Downtown Memphis, I changed with time. Instead of a storefront business, I decided to create a home-based business to travel, freelance design freely, and put more time into inspiring positive change through performance arts and storytelling. I had no idea I would purchase a property in a poor distressed area, but I did, and that is when the more complex work began. I then realized I was chosen to work towards the image of a neighborhood run by many slumlords and uncaring people who took advantage of the poor. The neighborhood was known as a dangerous and dilapidated area. However, things are changing with demanding work and the support of anchors, businesses, property owners, and community leaders. My husband (Darryl) and I started the neighborhood association in 2007; we rolled our sleeves up and have been working towards positive change ever since. It has been a long, challenging journey, but the work is still incomplete.

What drives you to improve your business/organization?

My drive is always to inspire others to make positive change, do excellent work, and change negative images - starting with the self-first.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I get up and hit the floor with excitement to challenge the items that were left on my to-do list. So, grab a cup of coffee, run to my computer, paperwork, emails, phone calls to paint a wall, create flowers, play with my dog, and back to my computer. My days are long and full of exciting choices to do and work on.

What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?

My favorite things are making others smile, designing flowers, working out, walking, traveling, sitting near the water, writing, and planning activities that bring people together. I am also the President of a non-profit organization healing the land globally. This is an organization that ministers to less fortunate people.

How does the Medical District stand out from the rest of the city to you?

The most rewarding part of my arduous work is to see the residents, stakeholders, business owners, and investors work together to change the image of a "hood" to a neighborhood. What's rewarding is to have the support needed to bring new development our way.

What do you hope to see in the future for the Medical District?

In the future, I hope to see a unified area that is richly impressive. I hope to see the development shared among all neighborhoods so that everyone is proud to live, work, worship, and travel through the Medical District.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

SHELDA EDWARDS

is a designer and illustrator

building a brand on inclusively.

Her visually playful work nor-

malizes body positivity and en-

courages dialogue around gen-

der and self-identity. Since

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Shelda has worked in non-

profit, tech, advertising, fund-

raising, and marketing. A few of

her favorite projects included

working with clients who are

giving back to their

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Follow Shelda on Instagram

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